UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.17/1998/16
9 April 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth session
20 April-1 May 1998
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*

OTHER MATTERS

Letter dated 30 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the Final Declaration and the Programme for Priority Actions (English and French texts), adopted by the International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development, which was held in Paris from 19 to 21 March 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have these texts circulated as working documents of the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will be held in New York from 20 April to 1 May 1998.

(Signed) Alain DEJAMMET

* E/CN.17/1998/1.

** The attachment is being issued in the languages of submission only.

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ANNEX

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
WATER AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- PARIS - 19-20-21 March 1998 -

PROGRAMME
FOR PRIORITY ACTIONS

• I - IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF WATER RESOURCES AND USES FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

❑ I - A - ESTABLISHING AND IMPROVING INTEGRATED SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING WATER RESOURCES, THEIR USES AND ECOSYSTEMS

Within the framework of official development assistance, a high priority should be given to the strengthening or establishment of local, national or international integrated water information systems (collection, analysis, management and dissemination of data on water quantity and quality, and its availability and uses in the various water sub-sectors), in order to mobilise the necessary information for water resource and ecosystem management, use regulation and protection against point or non-point pollution and prevention of crisis situation.

A better assessment of the resource, the different water uses and of their efficiency (domestic water, irrigation, industry, hydroelectricity, transport, leisure, fishing, aquiculture, and so forth) is essential.

O I-A-1 - STRENGTHENING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF INTEGRATED INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Integrated information systems should be developed on various scales, ranging from local to global, and include all parameters necessary for the integrated and sustainable management of water and ecosystems. They should be structured in the form of long-term monitoring systems at the different relevant levels, particularly for large river and lake basins, and aquifers.

Such information and data have a fundamental economic value for assisting in the management and use of water resources, and in the protection of the environment.

The sustainability of such monitoring systems is the responsibility of each Government, which must also make sure the quantity and quality of information is improved.

O I-A-2 - DEVELOPMENT OF DATA EXCHANGE

Priority should be given to the national and international standardisation of definitions, development of user-friendly formats, and information access and exchange.

❑ I - B - TRENGTHENING REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR ACQUIRING FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF WATER RESOURCES AND THEIR USES:

o I-B-1 - UNDERSTANDING MAJOR TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT:

In order to improve research capacities, international scientific, institutional and technical co-operation should be strengthened to develop concepts along with indicators and common methodologies, particularly as concerns the characterisation of:

(a) reliable and "usable" resources, that can be used in a sustainable water management framework, on the basis of rational demand management.

(b) different consumptive or non-consumptive water uses in the basins, their evolution and efficiency,

(c) point and non-point pollution sources,

(d) the condition (water quality and quantity) of aquatic ecosystems, rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater,

(e) eutrophication and biological degradation of rivers, lakes and reservoirs,

(f) extreme meteorological and hydrological events (floods, droughts),

(g) economic and social value of ecosystem functions,

(h) the modification of the watercourse flow regime and the functioning of aquifer systems caused by infrastructures, withdrawals and discharges,

(i) changes in land use and soil degradation, biological diversity and living aquatic and terrestrial resources.

Because women have a particular role in utilising and conserving water resources on a daily basis, their knowledge and experience should be considered as a component of any sustainable water management programme. Information systems should rely on data collected and analysed in such a way as to reflect the role of women.

The users of water-related information must be associated with data collection in order to facilitate their understanding of the impact of local actions on the resource and their involvement in defining solutions for sustainable protection of this resource.

Prospective studies should be carried out on water resource availability (both quantity and quality) and changes in water demand in order to provide

information to assist in identifying potential serious water crises. It is particularly important to be able to assess the interaction between inland freshwater resource management and other major environmental issues. These include desertification, climate change, deforestation, soil degradation, biodiversity, and impacts on downstream coastal ecosystems. It is necessary also to make a connection between water, health, sufficient nourishment and poverty of the populations.

O I-B-2 - FACILITATING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE:

In order to improve knowledge, it is necessary to reinforce regional and global programmes, that will rely, whenever possible, on national programmes. Considering their geographic coverage and their aim, some of these programmes should be financially supported while appropriate co-operation could deal with other national programmes.

Some on-going international programmes are mentioned hereafter:
(a) the « Eurowaternet » network of the European Environmental Agency,
(b) the Euro-Mediterranean Water Information System (EMWIS),
(c) the Global Runoff Data Centre (GRDC) and the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS), both of which fall within the Operational Hydrology Programme (OHP) of WMO,
(d) the Flow Regimes from International Experimental and Network Data (FRIEND) within the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO,
(e) FAO's AQUASTAT on the agricultural uses of water,
(f) GEMS/Water programme of UNEP, WHO and other co-operating United Nations Agencies and others, should be strengthened so as to ensure regional up-to-date and accurate coverage.
(g) the aquifer programme of the large SSO basins, with African countries and other organisations concerning deep water resources in Africa.
(h) developing actions for the prevention of natural catastrophes, initiated during the International Decade
(i) OMS/UNICEF joint monitoring programmes of drinking water and sanitation.
(j) the inter-American water network of the Organisation of American States.

❑ I - C - NETWORKING WATER DOCUMENTATION SYSTEMS

The following activities should be promoted:

- collection of documentation and wide dissemination to all stakeholders, in order to promote in-service training of the sector's professionals, disseminate new knowledge, and enhance public awareness of important water-related issues (e.g. social, health, environment, institutions, technology, economics). Such documentation should also be made available in a form that can be both understood and used by decision-makers and the general public alike.

- creation of interlinked and widely disseminated systems for exchanging institutional, economic and technical documentation, as well as baseline information, such as directories of organisations and lists of experts and specialists, acting as a

network between « documentation centres » focusing on specific water-related topics.

- development of compatible references, protocols for computerised exchange of documentation and multilingual approaches, as well as the management of the network and the training of documentation specialists.

● II - PROMOTING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

This topic deals with both:

- integrated management of water resources, and
- services for the supply and use of the resources, including sanitation.

As the Harare experts group meeting recalled, an integrated approach requires a significant reinforcement of institutional and human capacities at both national and local levels in a complementary manner, associating civil society at each of these levels.

These actions require, to be effective and durable, strong political will and long-term financial commitment.

❑ II - D - INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

o II-D-1 - ROLE OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

In order to improve management of the water sector, it is important to support integrated and multi-year projects for the establishment and improvement of administrative, financial and technical frameworks. These projects should take into account the specific needs, capacities and culture of each country and address in particular:

- **II-D-1-1** - adequate legislation and regulations for an integrated management of water resources and the means for their enforcement,
- **II-D-1-2** - management agencies, that already exist or are to be set up, together with a precise definition of their responsibilities and financial resources,
- **II-D-1-3** - institutional bodies and procedures enabling the participation of local authorities, representatives of users and civil society in decision-making, projects specifications and programmes, including women, nomadic populations and the poor.
- **II-D-1-4** - detailed studies of master plans for long-term water development and management, at the level of large river basins or aquifers in particular,
- **II-D-1-5** - elaboration of multi-year priority investment programmes at a national level that take into account « user-pays » systems and the « polluter-pays » principle, and capacity to pay.

O II-D-2 - ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Devolution to local authorities of responsibilities for organisation and management of public water supply, sanitation services and irrigation systems should be encouraged. The following objectives merit particular attention:

- **II-D-2-1-** Improving the decision-making capacity of local managers,
- **II-D-2-2-** Facilitating exchange of experience between managing agencies,
- **II-D-2-3-** Improving the economic and technical efficiency of the services.
- **II-D-2-4-** Promoting local initiatives.

O II-D-3 - PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The participation of civil society and the general public in the planning, design and funding of programmes requires:

- **II-D-3-1-** access to information and its dissemination by the media and educational systems in particular,
- **II-D-3-2-** the training of those involved in the decision-making process, including leaders of village communities, irrigation water users' associations and non-governmental organisations/associations,
- **II-D-3-3-** the promotion and co-ordination of initiatives within organisations that have the necessary expertise and capacity for advocacy,
- **II-D-3-4-** the full involvement of local communities and women -who play a key role-; raising awareness of children, starting at primary school.

It is recommended that a significant share of official development assistance for large infrastructure, equipment and institutional reform projects be allocated for the promotion of these activities.

O II-D-4 - IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR TRANSBOUNDARIES FRESHWATER BODIES

Considering inter alia the relevant chapters of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration, and the programme for further implementation as adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, riparian states are encouraged to co-operate among each other on matters relating to transboundary water resources, taking into account the interests of all states concerned. To this end, it is desirable inter alia to:

- promote the exchange of reliable and comparable information between riparian countries,

- develop dialogues at all levels, including at the level of the relevant international institutions and arrangements whenever appropriate,
- define priority action plans of common interest to be implemented in order to improve water management and pollution control.

There are more than 215 transboundary rivers in the world. The action of bi- and multilateral donor institutions in the field of transboundary freshwater resources development and management should be enhanced and facilitated.

The Global Environment Facility should take into account this Priority Action Programme under its existing relevant focal areas to build body-based operational program activities which meet Global Environment Facilities guidelines.. In particular, capacity-building projects should include action in support of dissemination of information and awareness raising among political and technical decision-makers and to support preliminary feasibility studies at the national level where these are consistent with overall national development strategy in the countries concerned.

o II-D-5 - COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION :

We should strengthen studies which aim to improve knowledge of water costs in the different uses, to monitor performance and to provide economic indicators at national and regional level, taking into account the interests of the states concerned,

Monitoring mechanisms should be developed or established on an appropriate scale. In order to define and standardise their methods, to disseminate and compare their results, on a voluntary basis, they should have sufficient means to carry out these programmes and research and facilitate their co-ordination in international co-operation networks.

❑ II - E - HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Among the different aspects of human resources development, that of the multidisciplinary and multisectoral training and information of both professionals and users in the water sector is a prerequisite for the optimum use of water resources and the cost-effectiveness of facilities.

o II-E-1 - VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Funding in this field should progressively and significantly increase.

In-service vocational training can only be sustained through funding by public and private employers in the water sector.

Particular attention should be paid to the training of women at all levels.

ODA should give priority to the establishment and development of regional training focal points, while developing as a first step the educational capacities of existing training institutions.

Depending on requirements and situation, this could be implemented by setting up training institutions specialised in technical and managerial aspects of the water sector at a national or regional level.

The training of trainers and the development of necessary educational materials could be promoted by organising these training institutions into networks.

• II - E - 1-1 - TRAINING OF HIGH-LEVEL PROFESSIONALS

The formulation and implementation of water policies based on the principles of integrated water resources management, require the appropriate training of high-level professionals.

• II - E - 1- 2 - TRAINING OF OPERATORS

Training the least qualified staff (who represent the majority of workers in the sector) by using appropriate in-service training methods should be given a high priority.

Vocational training leads to the improvement of:

- operating conditions, maintenance and rehabilitation of community networks and installations, for reducing leakage and monitoring water quality,
- administrative organisation, and management relations with users in water community services and administrations.

o II-E-2 - RESEARCH AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY :

National and regional research programmes linked to higher education, especially these relating to integrated water and land management in watershed areas and the functioning of water-related ecosystems, should be developed.

Exchange of know-how and technology should be promoted, including among developing countries, taking into account indigenous technologies.

The international community has a particular responsibility in this field.

o II-E-3 - AWARENESS, INFORMATION AND EDUCATION OF USERS :

Water management is not only the responsibility of the professionals of the sector but also increasingly involves all the users and local populations.

Water and land users alike should be made more aware of issues relating to wastage control, the economic, social and cultural value of water, prevention of water-borne diseases and pollution, soil erosion and environmental protection.

This requires a global and transdisciplinary approach integrated into the culture, know-how and traditions of local populations.

Specific actions should be strengthened to enable women to participate fully and equitably in the formulation and management of projects.

● III - DEFINING STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT AND IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE MEANS OF FINANCING

❑ III - F - FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUB-NATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Countries that have not yet formulated sub-national or national strategies for the water sector should be encouraged to do so while identifying medium and long term priorities. These strategies will provide a coherent framework governing the actions of the different elements of the public and private sectors. Regional strategies should be developed as necessary.

Existing strategies should be regularly evaluated and updated.

The implementation of these strategies should meet the requirements for integrated water resources management and include the adaptation and modernisation of institutional, legislative and regulatory frameworks; the improvement of knowledge of resources and uses; and the training of executives and technicians in service management and equipment maintenance.

It is recognised that water is a key natural resource for future prosperity and stability and emphasis could be given to mechanisms and instruments to support the use of water as a catalyst for regional co-operation rather than a source of potential conflict.

❑ III - G - MOBILIZATION OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES

o III-G-1 - MOBILISATION OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL RESOURCES

Water planning and management need to be taken into account within a socio-economic development context while recognising the vital role of water in the fulfilment of basic human needs, food security, poverty alleviation and the functioning of water-related ecosystems. Specific conditions of non-monetary sectors of the economy should be taken into account.

Incentives to improve use and protection of water resources, pricing and financial, as appropriate, should be developed. Access to traditional water resources should be protected.

We also need to explore ways and means of facilitating a gradual transition towards full cost recovery to the extent possible, taking into account the essential role of water in meeting basic human needs. Subsidies, or other appropriate transparent financial mechanisms, for specific groups, in particular for people living in poverty, might be considered in some countries.

Transparency in economic and financial management of services is a precondition for effective cost recovery.

The implementation of actions to reduce costs, such as improving management, competition between operators, leakage reduction and use of appropriate technologies, could reduce overall funding requirements.

To seek that, after comprehensive public debate among all stakeholders, the various functions of sustainable water management are funded, appropriate frameworks should be established in order to:.

- **III-G-1-1-** enable the sustainable mobilisation of private or public funds to finance water supply and sanitation networks,
- **III-G-1-2-** facilitate access to credit by decentralised public and private management structures, especially local communities and NGOs, and encourage the development of micro-credits,
- **III-G-1-3-** provide, as needed, the public or private investors with appropriate risk guarantee schemes for the financing of investments,
- **III-G-1-4 -** set up to the extent possible « user-pays » pricing systems that cover direct or indirect costs of the services with the costs billed to users who can afford to pay. Prices must be justified by the quality and reliability of the services provided to the users,
- **III-G-1-5 -** manage, as needed, the transition towards the recovery of, as a minimum, operational maintenance and replacement costs and watershed management costs with, as necessary, an intermediate phase in which these costs could be partly covered by public funds,
- **III-G-1-6 -** take the necessary measures, cross-subsidies in particular, in a transparent manner, to prevent management of services limiting access to water by low-income users,
- **III-G-1-7 -** apply efficiently the « polluter-pays » principle, using economic instruments for environmental purposes that are in proportion with the damage caused to the environment,

- **III-G-1-8 -** take into account costs related to the acquisition of knowledge, surface and ground water protection and development, the preservation and management of ecosystems, river basins, aquifers and the maintaining of wetlands and water flow in watercourses.

O III-G-2 - MOBILISATION OF EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Bi- and multilateral donors should assist countries in the formulation and implementation of their integrated water resources management strategy. Their support to the sector should be consistent with the defined priorities in order to ensure efficient synergy between external assistance and national and local financial resources.

Bi- and multilateral donors should contribute to the implementation of the defined priorities by supporting both structural reforms and projects and by mobilising the financial resources necessary to implement them.

Evidence that existing resources are used optimally will help mobilise additional financial resources from national and international sources, both public and private.

The joint action and co-financing of multilateral and bilateral donors should be emphasised, in order that beneficiary countries obtain maximum effectiveness from external financing, in particular for integrated regional projects.

O III-G-3 - USE OF INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS

Due consideration should be given to more private sector involvement, innovative models for local water resources management such as Build Operate Transfer, and use of market mechanisms, where applicable.

O III-G-4 - MOBILISATION OF LOCAL HUMAN RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE STEMMING FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES:

In addition to the modern water policy approaches, it is important to:

- **III-G-4-1-** mobilise local human resources as much as possible;

- **III-G-4-2-** take advantage of the population's diversified know-how, especially in rural and pastoral areas, concerning the detection, collection, conservation, use and recovery of water.

❑ III - H - PRIORITIES FOR OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Bi- and multilateral donors should first concentrate concessional financing on enabling activities and programmes intended to improve the enabling environment, in order to meet basic priority needs, building on on-going activities as far as possible.

Among these:

O III-H-1 - MEETING BASIC NEEDS (drinking water supply, sanitation, control of water-related diseases, etc). Rapid action is necessary to reach progressively approved international standards in order to meet quantitative and qualitative basic human needs in rural and underprivileged urban areas. Special attention should be paid to the means of achieving the eradication of water-borne diseases.

Special consideration should be given to gender and equality issues; including programs to improve the status of women and increase their meaningful participation in decision-making.

O III-H-2 - THE ORGANIZATION OF INTEGRATED MONITORING SYSTEMS AND DATABASES to improve information on resources, uses and pollution. Access by professionals and users to that information and documentation, necessary for water management and financing, will be promoted.

O III-H-3 - THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTITUTIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC REFORMS to establish river basin organisations and national or regional regulating authorities; to modernise irrigation or municipal water services; and to improve usage efficiency, demand management and maintenance of facilities.

O III-H-4 - VOCATIONAL AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING of all categories of personnel by creating or modernising specialised technical training centres and training institutes dealing with the administration and management of water services.

O III-H-5 - FACILITATE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
for the development of general interest infrastructures that are economically justified, ecologically and socially sound and that fit into master plans, at the level of large river basins in particular, and into integrated programmes for priority investment.

O III-H-6 - SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER-RELATED ECOSYSTEMS, in order to preserve biodiversity and ensure soil and water conservation, through appropriate policies for land use planning, combating desertification, erosion control, forestry management and municipal waste.

o III-H-7 - RESEARCH AND TRAINING
Support for research, training and capacity building in order to facilitate the transfer of technology and increase the efficiency of the technology transferred.

o **III-H-8 - NATURAL DISASTER (FLOOD AND DROUGHTS) PREPAREDNESS**

There is a need to establish or strengthen mechanisms for regional consultations on drought and flood preparedness ; early warning systems and mitigation plans at local and national levels, and regional emergency funds and/or collective insurance programs. At the international level, there is a need to maintain support of these activities following the close of the IDNDR (1999).

o **III-H-9 - EFFICIENCY OF IRRIGATION**

Set up economic incentives for an efficient use of water resources, particularly for the irrigation sector with the objective of increasing the quantity and regularity of food production.

● ANNEX - PROMOTION OF PARTNERSHIP AND DIALOGUE

All public authorities, public and private companies, non-governmental organisations, whether local, national or international, responsible for or in charge of conceiving, designing, approving, implementing, managing, supervising or financing activities, programmes or services in the water sector are invited to engage in a permanent dialogue with all users and beneficiaries. This dialogue requires sharing all relevant information with stakeholders and discussions on objectives and implementation modalities.

Transfer mechanisms of know-how, knowledge, technology as well as all relevant information for improving efficiency and fostering the development of services and activities will be promoted, among others, through institutional or business partnerships.

All actors will support, as appropriate :

- sharing and dissemination of experience gained in practice (projects, programmes and activities, etc),
- information exchange on institutions, problems faced and innovative solutions adopted and on all other activities that may contribute to raising the public and the professional community's awareness of water-related issues and solutions.

Networks built for the above aims should be open to other networks and, as much as possible, to all partners in the water sector. Information shared on these networks should be freely accessible to all.

Final Version

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WATER AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

PARIS – 19/20/21 March 1998

FINAL DECLARATION

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation meeting in Paris for the International Conference on Water and Sustainable Development, 19 – 21 March 1998,

Convinced that freshwater is as essential to sustainable development as it is to life and that water has social, economic and environmental values that are inter-linked and mutually supportive,

Guided by the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 1992), in particular the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 and its Chapter 18, and of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 1997,

Recalling previous deliberations on water by the international community, in particular the conclusions of the meetings at Mar del Plata (1977), New Delhi (1990), Dublin (1992) and Noordwijk (1994),

Noting the ongoing preparatory process to the VIth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, including the contributions made by the expert group meetings recently held in Harare and Petersberg,

Seriously concerned by a situation in which a quarter of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water; more than half of mankind lacks adequate sanitation; poor water quality and lack of hygiene are among the primary causes of death and disease; and scarcity of water, flood and drought, poverty, pollution, inadequate treatment of waste and lack of infrastructure pose serious threats to social and economic development, human health, global food security and the environment,

Also concerned that constraints on access to water, in terms of quantity and quality, could become a major limiting factor in sustainable development,

Determined to take advantage of the opportunities to tackle these problems by promoting local and national systems for managing the sustainable use of water resources, based on an integrated approach linking development with protection of the natural environment, participation of all actors and interested parties, the involvement of both men and women, and recognition of the social, economic and environmental value of water,

Underline that

- water resources are essential for satisfying basic human needs, health, energy and food production, and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for social and economic development;

- the protection of ecosystems is essential for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the natural hydrologic cycle in order to manage freshwater resources in a sustainable manner;

- water is a key natural resource for future prosperity and stability, which should be recognised as a catalyst for regional co-operation;

- it is crucial to improve knowledge and understanding at all levels of water resources in order to develop, manage and protect them better and to use them in a more efficient, equitable and sustainable manner;

- a high priority should be given to strengthening institutions, in particular local institutions, and improving training and awareness of professionals and users alike;

- the development, management, use and protection of water should be :
  - promoted by a partnership between the public and private sectors, thus mobilising good practice and long term financing,
  - based upon a participatory decision-making process open to all users, in particular women, people living in poverty and disadvantaged groups.

  The role of NGOs and other socio-economic partners remains essential.

- international co-operation should play a key role in achieving these objectives, at national, regional and global levels.

Call upon the international community, public authorities at every level and civil society to give priority to providing access for all to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Also call upon the international community, to develop an agreed statement of the principles to be applied in developing and implementing local and national water management systems and international co-operation to support them, taking into consideration the outcome of the Harare Expert Meeting.

Commit ourselves to support the implementation of the following guidelines, where appropriate and in the framework of national and local strategies, taking into account each country's specific situation :

- **Promote the integration of all aspects of the development, management and protection of water resources**, by developing plans which set out to satisfy basic needs and to promote efficient and equitable allocation of water resources, the protection of ecosystems and the maintenance of the hydrological cycle.
  To this end, the creative development and evaluation of a wide range of options and their benefits and risks, together with the ongoing co-ordination of watershed development, management and protection, are essential. Public authorities at every level and civil society should play their part in this process and related decision making.
  Governments have a crucial role to play in creating enabling frameworks for local and national water resource management through legislative, economic, social and environmental measures.
  Shared vision between riparian countries is important for the effective development, management and protection of transboundary water resources.
  International conventions such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification[1] and the Ramsar Convention[2] can make a contribution on the integration of their special interests in the sustainable use of water.
  Thinking on approaches to integrated water development, management and protection should be facilitated by all relevant institutions, including the World Water Council, and supported by exchanges of experience through informal networking between stakeholders within the framework of existing institutions.

- **Mobilise adequate financial resources from public and private sectors** and, as an important part of that task, enhance the effective use of available resources.
  To this end provisions for progressive recovery of direct service costs and overheads, while safeguarding low income users, should be encouraged.
  Both the polluter-pays principle should be promoted and user-pays systems should be encouraged, at national and local levels, and measures should be adopted to facilitate private funding in the financing of water and sanitation projects, taking into account the specific conditions in each country and region.

  Official development assistance should complement and focus on programmes designed for creating enabling frameworks, meeting basic needs, sustainable development, management and protection of water, protection of ecosystems and capacity building. Co-operation and co-ordination between bilateral and multilateral donors and recipient States should be strengthened.

In this context, a range of international organisations, including the Global Water Partnership, could have a notable role to play.

- **Improve knowledge, training and information exchange** by encouraging increased transfer of technology and expertise, the development of monitoring and information systems related to water resources and their different uses, and support programmes for vocational and continuous training. In parallel, people living in poverty and disadvantaged groups, indigenous communities, youth, local authorities, leaders of local communities and NGOs should be enabled to become more involved in the decision-making process. Women should be enabled to participate fully in project definition and implementation.

In this spirit, **emphasise** the importance of following up the guidance contained in the Programme of Priority Actions developed by the experts workshops during the Conference, as set up in the annex to this Declaration.

Submit this Programme of Priority Actions to the CSD for consideration at its VIth session during its deliberations on a strategic approach for the sustainable use of freshwater resources.

Suggest that relevant international organisations and institutions follow up the actions derived from the recommendations contained in this Declaration and its annex.

Stress the need to ensure that the problems of achieving sustainable development, management and protection, and equitable use of freshwater resources are kept under review, to improve co-ordination between UN Agencies and Programmes and other international organisations, to ensure periodic consideration within the UN system, in particular the Commission on Sustainable Development, of the proposed priorities of governments for action and to emphasise the role of UNEP in the field of environment.

Emphasise the need for continuous political commitment and broad-based public support to ensure the achievement of sustainable development, management and protection, and equitable use of freshwater resources, and the importance of civil society to support this commitment.

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(1) - United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

(2) - Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat